



CATALOGUE NO. 6321.0

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INDUSTRIAL DISPUTES, AUSTRALIA, FEBRUARY 1989

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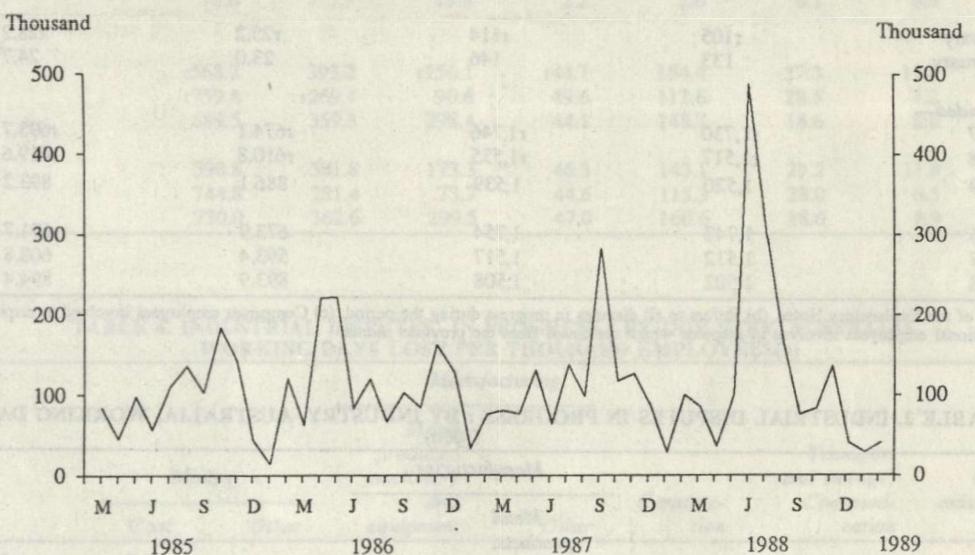
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MAIN FEATURES

WORKING DAYS LOST: AUSTRALIA



In February 1989—

- 41,100 working days were lost, the lowest February figure since monthly records commenced (October 1969).
 - 146 disputes were reported as being in progress, involving 24,700 employees.
 - The Metal products, machinery and equipment manufacturing industry grouping recorded more working days lost than any other industry (14,400).

In the 12 months ended February 1989—

- 257 working days were lost per thousand employees in disputes in progress during that period, an increase of 8.4% and 14.2% respectively over the twelve month period ending February 1987 and February 1988.
 - 1,539 disputes were reported as being in progress, involving 893,200 employees and the loss of 1,581,400 working days.
 - New South Wales recorded the lowest level of working days lost per thousand employees in that State (320) since the twelve month period ending May 1988 (313), while South Australia (88) recorded its lowest level since the twelve months ending July 1987 (83) and Tasmania (117) recorded its lowest level for any twelve month period since this statistic was first calculated.
 - 1,528 disputes were reported as having ended, of which
 - 970 (63.5%) were of 1 days duration or less;
 - 609 (39.9%) concerned disputes over managerial policy, involving 52.7% of all working days lost;
 - the 271 (17.7%) concerning wage claims involved 48.4% (434,500) of all employees involved in disputes and 30.0% (510,500) of working days lost.

NOTES

The statistics of industrial disputes are compiled mainly from data obtained from employers (both private and public sector) and trade unions concerning individual disputes, and from reports of government authorities.

The statistics relate to disputes which involved stoppages of work of ten working days or more at the establishments where the stoppages occurred.

A Glossary and Explanatory Notes are published on pages 5 to 7 of this publication.

TABLE 1. INDUSTRIAL DISPUTES IN PROGRESS : AUSTRALIA

Period		Number of disputes(a)		Employees involved ('000)		Working days lost ('000)
		Commenced in period	Total(b)	Newly involved(c)	Total(b)	
-1987	December	96	115	34.8	49.7	86.5
1988	January	81	86	12.2	12.6	29.2
	February	139	149	44.0	58.1	100.5
	March	168	187	34.7	41.9	84.8
	April	100	108	19.8	21.2	36.6
	May	147	159	57.4	68.5	101.0
	June	165	186	364.0	374.5	488.3
	July	91	107	117.5	192.8	297.8
	August	142	151	107.1	116.2	166.2
	September	109	121	33.7	49.7	76.3
	October	139	151	36.6	41.1	83.3
	November	150	167	51.8	59.0	136.1
	December	71	93	15.1	25.6	41.3
1989	January	105	114	25.2	28.2	28.7
	February	133	146	23.0	24.7	41.1
<i>Twelve months ended—</i>						
February	1987	r1,730	r1,746	r674.1	r693.7	1,365.1
	1988	r1,517	r1,535	r610.8	r619.6	r1,331.0
	1989	1,520	1,539	886.1	893.2	1,581.4
December	1986	1,747	1,754	673.9	691.7	1,390.7
	1987	1,512	1,517	593.4	608.8	1,311.9
	1988	1,502	1,508	893.9	894.4	1,641.3

(a) See paragraph 5 of the Explanatory Notes. (b) Refers to all disputes in progress during the period. (c) Comprises employees involved in disputes which commenced during the month and additional employees involved in disputes which continued from the previous month.

TABLE 2. INDUSTRIAL DISPUTES IN PROGRESS : BY INDUSTRY, AUSTRALIA, WORKING DAYS LOST ('000)

Period		Manufacturing							All industries	
		Mining		Metal products, machinery and equipment	Other	Construction	Transport and storage; Communication			
		Coal	Other				Other	Construction		
1987	December	11.5	0.7	6.5	25.9	0.7	26.5	14.6	86.5	
1988	January	10.1	0.9	1.3	1.3	7.5	1.5	6.6	29.2	
	February	47.4	11.4	8.4	7.6	7.2	3.4	15.1	100.5	
	March	34.0	10.3	3.8	8.8	14.9	4.4	8.6	84.8	
	April	3.5	3.2	3.6	0.7	6.4	2.9	16.3	36.6	
	May	27.9	3.9	19.2	5.0	29.4	3.0	12.6	101.0	
	June	123.5	5.6	168.1	15.6	64.6	17.4	93.4	488.3	
	July	77.6	3.8	66.7	33.9	30.5	20.0	65.3	297.8	
	August	18.9	8.3	9.3	13.5	7.2	1.8	107.2	166.2	
	September	25.3	6.4	15.8	5.8	8.8	7.0	7.2	76.3	
	October	25.1	7.6	5.1	3.2	23.9	5.4	13.0	83.3	
	November	57.5	33.1	7.3	15.1	1.7	7.4	14.0	136.1	
	December	20.5	2.8	0.8	6.8	5.7	1.0	3.6	41.3	
1989	January	r8.3	2.2	2.4	3.6	2.2	5.7	4.3	r28.7	
	February	7.1	1.5	14.4	8.1	2.4	3.0	4.7	41.1	
<i>Twelve months ended—</i>										
February	1987	309.0	187.6	190.9	220.9	122.9	56.4	277.4	1,365.1	
	1988	r317.4	52.1	200.1	184.1	r194.6	92.1	r290.7	r1,331.0	
	1989	429.1	88.8	316.6	120.1	197.8	78.9	350.1	1,581.4	
December	1986	362.0	179.4	187.4	205.3	117.7	57.6	281.4	1,390.7	
	1987	291.8	55.7	199.6	195.5	194.5	92.5	282.3	1,311.9	
	1988	471.2	97.4	309.5	117.4	207.9	75.0	362.9	1,641.3	

(a) Comprises Agriculture, forestry, fishing and hunting; Electricity, gas and water; Wholesale and retail trade; Finance, property and business services; Public administration and defence; Community services; Recreation, personal and other services.

(b) See paragraph 5 of the Explanatory Notes. (c) Refers to all disputes in progress during the period. (d) Comprises employees involved in disputes which commenced during the month and additional employees involved in disputes which continued from the previous month.

Recommended retail price - \$5.95

TABLE 3. INDUSTRIAL DISPUTES IN PROGRESS : STATES AND TERRITORIES, AUSTRALIA, WORKING DAYS LOST
('000)

Period		NSW	Vic.	Qld	SA	WA	Tas.	NT	ACT	Aust.
1987	December	47.6	26.3	2.8	2.5	1.1	5.4	0.2	0.7	86.5
1988	January	9.6	1.6	13.2	0.6	3.4	0.3	0.4	—	29.2
	February	62.7	9.5	7.8	5.3	12.4	0.9	1.2	0.6	100.5
	March	26.5	13.2	21.4	0.7	17.2	3.4	1.4	1.0	84.8
	April	10.7	13.1	3.3	1.3	5.3	1.5	0.2	1.3	36.6
	May	39.3	5.8	45.8	2.6	5.1	0.9	0.9	0.6	101.0
	June	269.0	64.7	94.2	23.4	24.8	3.5	1.3	7.4	488.3
	July	48.6	181.8	49.8	4.7	9.7	2.9	—	0.2	297.8
	August	120.5	21.2	6.8	4.1	7.3	3.5	1.7	1.2	166.2
	September	30.2	22.7	12.8	0.6	9.1	0.1	—	0.8	76.3
	October	31.7	7.4	11.3	1.1	30.2	0.8	0.5	0.3	83.3
	November	59.9	10.1	30.3	1.0	33.2	0.7	0.2	0.8	136.1
	December	21.3	11.6	2.8	1.6	2.9	—	1.1	—	41.3
1989	January	r13.3	2.0	r8.1	0.9	2.0	1.1	0.9	0.5	r28.7
	February	18.6	5.8	11.8	2.2	2.0	0.1	0.6	—	41.1
<i>Twelve months ended—</i>										
February	1987	r568.2	393.2	r156.1	r44.7	154.4	27.3	11.4	9.8	1,365.1
	1988	r759.8	r269.4	90.6	49.6	112.6	28.5	7.2	13.3	r1,331.0
	1989	689.5	359.3	298.4	44.1	148.7	18.6	8.8	14.0	1,581.4
December	1986	598.8	381.8	173.3	46.3	143.1	29.2	11.8	6.5	1,390.7
	1987	744.8	281.4	73.7	44.6	115.3	28.0	6.5	17.5	1,311.9
	1988	730.0	362.6	299.5	47.0	160.6	18.6	8.9	14.1	1,641.3

TABLE 4. INDUSTRIAL DISPUTES IN PROGRESS : BY INDUSTRY, AUSTRALIA,
WORKING DAYS LOST PER THOUSAND EMPLOYEES(a)

Period	Manufacturing								All industries	
	Mining		Metal products, machinery and equipment		Construction	Transport and storage; Communication		Other industries (b)		
	Coal	Other	Other	Other		Construction	Communication			
<i>Twelve months ended—</i>										
1985—										
December	6,892	1,928	256	312	666	430	71	228		
1986—										
December	10,741	3,328	445	328	458	135	72	242		
1987—										
December	8,920	1,072	479	305	743	217	70	223		
1987—										
February	r9,159	r3,562	456	353	477	131	70	237		
1988—										
February	9,845	984	481	286	734	216	71	225		
March	10,791	1,094	440	280	716	215	71	226		
April	10,504	1,078	384	265	705	208	73	218		
May	10,498	1,109	336	233	735	202	73	212		
June	14,292	1,121	715	234	910	236	93	282		
July	15,761	1,001	819	264	858	278	107	308		
August	15,912	1,040	807	252	835	274	126	318		
September	13,626	1,107	790	251	721	280	101	283		
October	13,977	1,163	771	235	732	230	98	276		
November	15,198	1,742	764	213	712	237	88	277		
December	15,543	1,777	750	183	725	177	85	269		
1989—										
January	r15,557	1,805	751	186	702	187	84	267		
February	14,281	1,625	765	187	683	186	81	257		

(a) See paragraph 4 of the Explanatory Notes. (b) Comprises Agriculture, forestry, fishing and hunting; Electricity, gas and water; Wholesale and retail trade; Finance, property and business services; Public administration and defence; Community services; Recreation, personal and other services.

TABLE 5. INDUSTRIAL DISPUTES IN PROGRESS : STATES AND TERRITORIES, AUSTRALIA,
WORKING DAYS LOST PER THOUSAND EMPLOYEES(a)

Period	NSW	Vic.	Qld	SA	WA	Tas.	NT	ACT	Aust.
<i>Twelve months ended—</i>									
1985— December	209	236	411	48	187	138	213	159	228
1986— December	304	240	207	95	272	190	200	55	242
1987— December	366	172	87	91	213	177	111	143	223
1987— February	288	247	187	92	291	176	189	82	237
1988— February	369	164	107	100	208	180	126	108	225
March	360	163	129	97	219	194	138	104	226
April	338	164	128	96	221	190	118	100	218
May	313	151	173	90	226	180	123	103	212
June	431	179	268	126	257	194	137	145	282
July	413	272	315	116	270	163	134	132	308
August	459	254	316	114	256	173	163	139	318
September	383	243	318	105	204	160	143	137	283
October	368	224	324	98	247	156	144	118	276
November	354	223	338	95	296	152	143	118	277
December	340	214	337	93	299	118	158	112	269
1989— January	341	213	328	94	295	122	164	116	267
February	320	210	331	88	276	117	153	111	257

(a) See paragraph 4 of the Explanatory Notes.

TABLE 6. INDUSTRIAL DISPUTES ENDING IN THE 12 MONTHS TO FEBRUARY 1989 : AUSTRALIA,
CAUSE, DURATION AND METHOD OF SETTLEMENT

Number of disputes	Employees involved (directly and indirectly) ('000)	Working days lost ('000)	
		CAUSE OF DISPUTE	DURATION OF DISPUTE
Wages	271	434.5	510.5
Hours of work	26	19.3	32.0
Leave, pensions, compensation	67	16.4	47.7
Managerial policy	609	309.1	895.0
Physical working conditions	320	60.1	145.4
Trade unionism	195	25.0	34.1
Other(a)	40	33.3	34.3
Total	1,528	897.8	1,699.0
DURATION OF DISPUTE			
Up to and including 1 day	970	732.6	724.0
Over 1 to 2 days	191	49.2	107.5
Over 2 and less than 5 days	161	34.8	140.2
5 and less than 10 days	144	68.6	541.7
10 and less than 20 days	49	10.9	136.9
20 days and over	13	1.7	48.7
Total	1,528	897.8	1,669.0
METHOD OF SETTLEMENT			
Negotiation	302	117.8	187.9
State legislation	143	30.8	98.5
Federal and joint Federal-State legislation	203	246.8	788.4
Resumption without negotiation	855	497.3	576.3
Other methods	25	5.1	47.9
Total	1,528	897.8	1,699.0

(a) Includes disputes not elsewhere categorised.

GLOSSARY

Cause of dispute

1. The statistics of causes of industrial disputes relate to the main cause of the stoppage of work and not necessarily all causes that may have been responsible for the stoppage of work. For these reasons, the statistics do not reflect the relative importance of all causes of disputes between employers and employees. The causes are classified from information supplied by employers and according to standards determined by the International Labour Organisation. The classification of causes is as follows:

Wages. Claims involving general principles relating to wages e.g. increase (decrease) in wages; variation in method of payment or combined claims relating to wages, hours or conditions of work in which the claim about wages is deemed to be the most important. Combined claims in which other claims are deemed to be the most important are included under the relevant cause.

Hours of work. Claims involving general principles relating to hours of work e.g. decrease (increase) in hours; distribution of hours.

Leave, pensions, compensation. Claims involving general principles relating to holiday and leave provisions; pension and retirement provisions; workers' compensation provisions; insertion of penal clause provisions in awards.

Managerial policy. Disputes concerning the managerial policy of employers e.g. computation of wages, hours, leave, etc. in individual cases; docking pay, docking leave credits, fines; disciplinary matters including dismissals, suspension; alleged victimisation of union members or officials; principles of promotion and filling positions, transfers, roster complaints, retrenchment policy; employment of particular persons and personal disagreements; production limitations or quotas.

Physical working conditions. Disputes concerning physical working conditions and safety issues e.g. protective clothing and equipment; first aid services; uncomfortable working conditions; lack of, or the conditions of, amenities; claims for assistance; shortage or poor distribution of equipment or material; condition of equipment; new production methods and equipment; arduous physical tasks.

Trade unionism. Disputes concerning employment of non-unionists, inter-union and intra-union disputes; sympathy stoppages in support of employees in another industry; recognition of union activities.

Other. Disputes concerning protests directed against persons or situations other than those relating to the employer/employee relationship e.g. political matters; fining and gaoling of persons; lack of work; lack of adequate transport; non-award public holidays; accidents and attendance at funerals. Stoppages for which no reason is given are also included in this category.

Disputes

2. For these statistics, an *industrial dispute* is defined as a withdrawal from work by a group of employees, or a refusal by an employer or a number of employers to permit some or all of their employees to work, each

withdrawal or refusal being made in order to enforce a demand, to resist a demand, or to express a grievance.

3. A dispute affecting several establishments has been counted as a single dispute if it is organised or directed by one person or organisation in each State or Territory in which it occurs; otherwise it is counted as a separate dispute at each establishment and in each industry in which it occurred. Prior to December 1987 disputes were counted differently (refer to paragraph 5 of the Explanatory Notes for other details).

4. When there is a return to work between stoppages over the same issue, and the return to work is for less than two complete calendar months, the dispute is deemed continuing. When the return to work is for two or more calendar months, the dispute is considered to have ended at the time of the return to work. Should a subsequent stoppage occur, it is counted as a new dispute.

Duration of dispute

5. The *duration* of a dispute is the average number of working days lost per employee involved in the dispute. The duration of the dispute is calculated by dividing the total number of working days lost in the dispute by the number of employees involved (both directly and indirectly).

Employees

6. *Employees* refer to wage and salary earners only. Excluded are persons who are self-employed (e.g. building sub-contractors, owner-drivers of trucks) and employers.

7. *Employees directly involved* are those who actually participated in the dispute in order to enforce or resist a demand or to express a grievance.

8. *Employees indirectly involved* are those who ceased work at the establishment where the stoppages occurred, but who are not themselves parties to the dispute. Employees who ceased work at establishments other than those where the stoppages occurred are excluded. See paragraph 2 of the Explanatory Notes.

9. *Total employees involved* for any period of time are obtained by adding together the number of employees involved in each dispute in the period. For any period of time the figures may include details of the same employees involved in more than one dispute. The longer the period of reference, the more chance there is of some double counting in the number of employees involved. Where there are varying numbers of employees involved during the progress of a dispute, the figures of employees involved included in the statistics relate to the largest number of individual employees involved on any one day. Generally, the *total* number of employees involved for each year will equal the sum of the total number of employees involved in the first month of a year plus the number of employees *newly* involved in subsequent months. Differences between monthly and annual totals can occur due to the temporary cessation of stoppages which resume in subsequent months. Employees re-involved in this type of dispute are not classified as

employees newly involved in stoppages in the second period in which the dispute occurs.

Method of settlement

10. Statistics of the *method of settlement* of industrial disputes relate to the *method directly responsible for ending the stoppage of work* and not necessarily to the method (or methods) responsible for settling all matters in dispute. For these reasons, they do not reflect the relative importance of the work of various industrial tribunals operating under State and Federal legislation. The classification of method of settlement is as follows:

Negotiation. Private negotiation between the parties involved, or their representatives, without the intervention or assistance of authorities constituted under State or Federal industrial legislation.

State legislation. Intervention or assistance of an industrial authority or authorities created by or constituted under State conciliation and arbitration or wages board legislation, or reference to such authorities or compulsory or voluntary conference. Intervention, assistance or advice of State government officials or inspectors.

Federal and joint Federal-State legislation. Compulsory or voluntary conference or by intervention or assistance, of, or reference to, the industrial tribunals created by or constituted under the Conciliation and Arbitration Act, Coal Industry Acts, Stevedoring Industry Act, and other acts such as the Navigation Act; Public Service Arbitra-

tion Act. Intervention, assistance or advice of Federal government officials or inspectors.

Resumption without negotiation. This category may include some disputes which are settled subject to negotiation of a formal nature, such as industrial court hearings. Stop-work meetings are included, and this category may also include disputes settled by 'resumption' as stated, but about which no further information is available.

Other methods. Mediation; filling places of employees on strike or locked out; closing establishments permanently; dismissal of employees.

Working days lost

11. *Working days lost* refer to working days lost by employees directly and indirectly involved in the dispute and figures are generally as reported by parties to the dispute. For some disputes working days lost are estimated on the basis of the number of employees involved and the duration of the dispute.

Working days lost per thousand employees

12. *Working days lost per thousand employees* are calculated from working days lost and estimates of employees obtained from the ABS Survey of Employment and Earnings and the ABS Labour Force Survey. Refer to paragraph 4 of the Explanatory Notes for details of the break in series.

EXPLANATORY NOTES

Introduction

1. The statistics in this publication relate to disputes which involved stoppages of work of ten working days or more at the establishments where the stoppages occurred. Ten working days is equivalent to the amount of ordinary time worked by ten people in one day.

2. The statistics of working days lost relate to the losses due to industrial disputes only (as defined in paragraph 2 of the Glossary). Effects on other establishments, such as stand-downs because of lack of materials, disruption of transport services, power cuts, etc. are not included.

3. The statistics of industrial disputes are compiled mainly from data obtained from employers (both private and public sector), from trade unions and from reports of government authorities. Particulars of some stoppages may have been estimated and the statistics therefore should be regarded as giving only a broad measure of the extent of industrial disputes as defined above.

Change in methodology

4. The basis for the calculation of working days lost per thousand employees was changed in January 1987 to include estimates of employees from the Survey of Employment and Earnings. They are combined with estimates of the number of employees in agriculture and in private households, obtained from the Labour Force Survey. Estimates have been recalculated on this basis for each month back to June 1984 and are available on request. In issues of this publication prior to January 1987, the estimates of numbers of employees were based entirely on Labour Force Survey data. The effect of the change is minimal at the 'all industries' level but is quite significant, in some cases, for individual industry groups.

5. The basis for the calculation of the number of disputes was changed in December 1987 (see paragraph 2 of the Glossary). Before that date, where the causes of several disputes were the same (e.g. National Wage Case disputes) the disputes were counted as one dispute in each State or Territory in which they occurred, irrespective of whether they were directed or organised by one person or organisation, or whether the dispute occurred in more than one industry. The reason for the change was to align the method of counting the number of disputes with the International Labour Organisation guidelines. In accordance with this change in definition, estimates of the number of disputes shown in this bulletin for past periods have been revised. In issues of this publication prior to September 1988, the number of disputes were counted on the old basis. Unpublished estimates of the number of disputes have been revised on the new basis from January 1985 and are available on request. The number of employees involved and working days lost remain unchanged.

Reliability of estimates

6. Inaccuracies may occur because of imperfections in information provided by respondents or in processing by the ABS. Inaccuracies of this kind are referred to as non-sampling errors. Although considerable care is taken in questionnaire design; in the instructions given to employers; and in editing the returns; these inaccuracies may occur in any enumeration, whether it be a full count or a sample.

Other ABS publications

7. Users may also wish to refer to the following publications:

Industrial Disputes, Australia, (6322.0)—issued annually

Labour Statistics, Australia, (6101.0)—issued annually

The Labour Force, Australia, Preliminary (6202.0)—issued monthly

The Labour Force, Australia (6203.0)—issued monthly

Trade Union Statistics, Australia, (6323.0)—issued annually

Trade Union Members, Australia, August 1986 (6325.0)

Employed Wage and Salary Earners, Australia (6248.0)—issued quarterly

Award Rates of Pay Indexes, Australia (6312.0)—issued monthly

Unpublished statistics

8. In addition to the statistics included in this and related publications, the ABS may have other relevant unpublished data available. Inquiries should be made to the officer whose name appears in the *Phone Inquiries* section of the inquiries box at the front of this publication, or to Information Services in the nearest ABS office.

9. Current publications produced by the ABS are listed in the *Catalogue of Publications, Australia (1101.0)*. The ABS also issues, on Tuesdays and Fridays, a *Publications Advice (1105.0)* which lists publications to be released in the next few days. The Catalogue and Publications Advice are available from any ABS office.

Symbols and other usages

r estimates revised since last issue
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10. Where estimates have been rounded, discrepancies may occur between sums of the component items and totals.

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